

DESCRIPTIVE ABSTRACT

The present invention relates to a method for treating a load of woody material made up of stacked elements, particularly a load of wood, by high-temperature heat treatment, using an enclosed treatment space which comprises means for processing a load of woody material that is to be treated (5), this load of woody material delimiting, within said enclosed space, a first volume (8) known as the raised-pressure chamber, situated upstream of the load that is to be treated (5) and a second volume (9) known as the recovery chamber, situated downstream of said load, heating means (10) for heating a heat-transfer fluid circulating in said enclosed space (1), circulating means (11) continuously circulating said heat-transfer fluid, monitoring means for monitoring the temperature and moisture content of the enclosed space, regulating means (12) for regulating the temperature and humidity of the enclosed treatment space, and sealing means sealing the top and bottom of the load of material, said method being characterized in that it comprises the steps consisting:

in permanently monitoring and measuring the atmosphere in each of said chambers using the temperature monitoring means then in comparing the data emanating from these monitoring means so as to act simultaneously and uniformly on the altering of the power of the means (10) for heating and, if any, on the cooling, of the heat-transfer gas by the regulating means (12) thus running a heat-treatment cycle, the rise in temperature of which is either linear or in steps, the temperature step levels and their duration being preestablished; this rise in temperature is then governed as a function of the behavior of the load of woody material (5) in terms of its thermal conductivity and as a function of equilibrium between the flow rate and the speed of the heat-transfer fluid between the two chambers (8, 9).

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**Figure for the Abstract:** single figure.